

Calvert (W.)

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS

DELIVERED NOVEMBER 5, 1860,

IN THE

Pennsylvania College of Dental Surgery,

BY

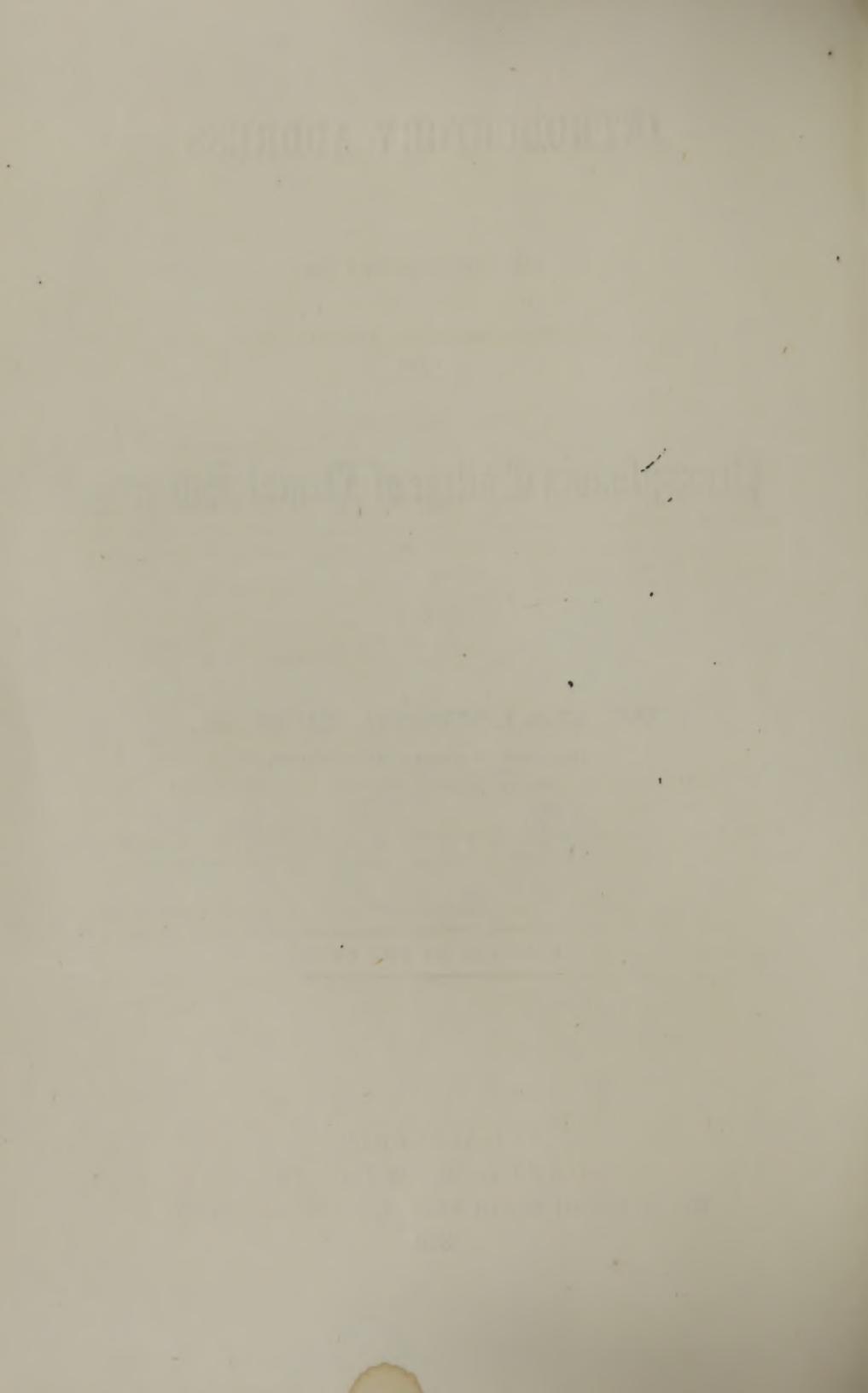
William ✓
W^r CALVERT, D. D. S.,

PROFESSOR OF MECHANICAL DENTISTRY.



PUBLISHED BY THE CLASS.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGE OF DENTAL SURGERY, {
November 5th, 1860. }

To PROFESSOR W. CALVERT, D. D. S.

At a meeting of the Class of this Institution, held after the close of your very appropriate Introductory Address, we, the undersigned committee, were appointed to solicit in behalf of our fellow students, a copy of said Address for publication. Awaiting your favorable reply, we remain

Yours, very respectfully,

CHAS. J. PEACOCK, England, {
WM. G. WILLISTON, Penna., } Committee.
THOS. C. STELLWAGEN, do.

133 NORTH 11th STREET, PHILADELPHIA, {
November 6th, 1860. }

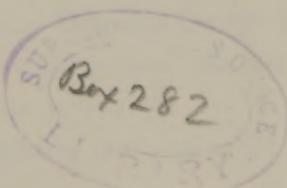
To MESSRS. CHAS. J. PEACOCK, England; WM. G. WILLISTON, Penn'a.; THOS. C. STELLWAGEN, Penn'a.

Your note of yesterday, expressing a desire on behalf of the Class of Pennsylvania College of Dental Surgery, for the publication of my Introductory Address, has been received.

It is, I assure you, with a just appreciation of this mark of respect with which you have honored me, that I most cordially respond to your wishes, placing the manuscript at your disposal.

With an earnest regard for yourselves, and the Class you represent, believe me,
Yours, truly,

W. CALVERT.



INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN:—Time moves on apace, amid the activities of life, almost wholly unobserved, without computation or proper reckoning. Moment by moment sweeps by, in rapid succession, whether improved or unimproved. The “to-day” becomes “yesterday,” when it is past, and constitutes, with its engagements, transactions and perturbations, a unit in the history of the past age, or period in an eventful life. Days, weeks, months and years are scarce realized, save in their anticipation, or inversely by the misimproved or lost. The seasons follow each other in their successive order, and to each and with each, comes and belongs their appropriate duties and labors, pleasures and privileges. Spring-time, with the newly developed and developing life; the breaking up of the fallow ground; its preparation and seed-sowing; the fields, the hills and the valleys, with their living verdure; the swelling germ, the shooting blade, the bursting bud, the full blossom and the opening flower; the early forest songsters, with their thrilling melody, *all* proclaim of life, and kiss, as it were, the return of the maternal breath that is breathed again upon them—imparting the *life-spring*. With it, too, comes the din of business in the market; the merchant, the professional man, the tradesman, the artists, etc., are all awake to stirring impulse, vigilant effort, watchful duty and active labor.

Agency is all-powerful, and ever active in the improvement of time in its season. The husbandman waits not for midsummer or autumn, to find a more favorable time for stirring up the soil, and sowing broadcast the enveloped germ that shall come forth in its mutation, and yield the prolific harvest. The seed that is sown, if sown in good ground, delays not its coming forth in the shooting blade, till the more genial and radiant heat of the summer's sun. So summer and autumn come and go, giving their increase of fruits and harvest, as the reward of well-timed husbandry; and being gleaned and gathered, are garnered as the season's appropriate ingathering.

Thus time, in its round and passage, has brought with its autumnal winds, its changing foliage, its falling leaves and fading verdure, another opening of our school,—a time which calls forth from us to you the greeting of welcome.

Welcome, then, gentlemen, welcome into our midst, and to the relationships here instituted.

And now, as winter again steals its march upon us, with its chilling winds and the by-and-by pelting blasts, congealing elements and snow-clad hills—it comes, with its befitting duties and labors.

It is a time when men lay aside their husbandry, when they can no longer plough, and sow, and reap, or glean, and gather into barns, granaries and storehouses—a time when nature herself, in certain aspects at least, seems shrouded as in death, in her mantle of white. Winter ever has been, is, and doubtless will ever be, emphatically, the time and season for the pursuit of mental wealth; that which truly enriches man, and makes him—*Man*; that which towers above, and soars beyond the *sordid* of the world; that which must ever elevate man in the order of created things, nearest the Infinite, and which, aside from all physical forces, and other distinguishing features, makes him to differ so widely and so eminently from other, and, indeed, all other forms of animated nature. Win-

ter may well be said to be the time of *implantation* and *development* in regard to intellectual acquirements or mental culture. The current of the electric thought is more intense and active, moves quicker, and with greater potency, takes a more extended and elevated range. The application is more easy, the perception more ready, and the mind finds its fulness in the appropriate aliment afforded. Appropriate aliment, did I say? Yes, these bodies of ours, tenements of the soul, require and demand sustaining, nourishing and strengthening aliment; this should abound in vitalizing, life-giving, life-sustaining and life-preserving properties. So it is with the mind; it needs, it seeks, constant supplies, which, if healthful and invigorating in character, fail not in expanding and developing its powers. But if, on the contrary, the supply be meagre—deficient both in quantity and quality, whether the case pertain to the man's physical, mental or moral condition, enervation, deprivation and death ensue.

At the present season men, and especially young men, separate from the familiar scenes, fondly cherished friendships, and all the pleasing associations that cling to their hallowed homes, and come forth to town and city, filling schools, seminaries and colleges, to engage in the pursuit to which we have just had reference,—that of knowledge.

Science, art and literature open wide their gates, to outspread and limitless fields, inviting entrance and rivalry to all, both aged and young, the learned as well as the learner. *Here* is the open, flowing fountain and the deep crystal stream, from which to obtain the refreshing and vivifying draught; but to drink is to *thirst*, and drink and thirst again. It is not here, as in many fields in the arena of life, when entered upon, are hedged in and contracted to the outward-bound vision; but when once the vantage-ground is gained, the avenues open, widen and lengthen; the interest in the

pursuit expands, heightens and strengthens; the prospect grows bolder, broader and more lustrous, intuitively drawing the earnest, decided traveler, (as per force,) step by step, from palm to palm, through the sands of time; ennobling and enriching him in the pathway of probation, and he is ever drawing increasing supplies from the exhaustless treasury of knowledge.

Time and season are, so to speak, the medium through which agency may have efficient action; through which results are made manifest; and as time and season are indispensably befitting the various pursuits of life, so also are adapted and qualified agencies *only* befitting these pursuits. I have spoken of time and season for pursuits. I now come to say something of adaptation and qualifications, and would crave your indulgence and attention, while considering a few thoughts in this connection, suggested to my mind as appropriate to the present, antecedent to what lies before you.

It matters not what orbit, if I may so express it, man moves in; what his sphere of action, or walk of life; no matter the business, profession or calling engaged in, there are certain innate, distinctive principles and qualifications, vastly important, (if not absolutely essential,) adapting him to his proper vocation. I say, then, that success, or a prosperous termination in any particular direction, in general or special engagements, is dependent, in part, at least, upon such pre-existent qualities, or capacities, moral, intellectual or physical, agreeably to, and in combination for, the particular object of pursuit. The controlling principle, or governing element in mind and matter, harmonize. The innate qualities or capacities of the mind in man are, to him, both in implantation and development, what the properties of terrene matter are to the implanted and enveloped germ. The chemical element and combination in the one case must partake of a certain character, in order rightly to develope the true blade, the stalk and the mature ear; so of the

other, the principal, the element and controlling force are indispensable to *true* development.

In speaking of the success of the pursuer, I would not be understood as taking merely a mercenary view,—that of dollars and cents only; nor would I be understood as admitting that either moral culture, mental endowments, intellectual or physical developments, *self-considered*, constitute an adequate basis for a prosperous career. Success in life may, and doubtless does, in its more common phrase and acceptance, refer to the getting of gain; yet, notwithstanding, in its true and more elevated sense, it has a higher meaning—as attainment, eminence, progression, perfection.

By embracing, then, in one composite whole, the various qualities of mind, or intellectual capacities, as well as physical development and energy, *it is* that adaptation, and as well success, are given in life; that men reach to heights of excellence or attain to eminence in a particular direction. As general and combined laws govern the affairs of a universe; so do general and controlling principles govern the vocations of life.

If, therefore, my proposition of appropriate and adequate adaptation be correct, (and I hold it to be a self-evident one,) then, obviously, the selection of a profession or calling of any kind is of incalculable moment—of the utmost importance.

Every day, and commonplace as is this matter of choice, and important as it should be regarded in all its aspects, it, nevertheless, clearly and conclusively appears, from even the most casual observation, that men very often *mistake* their calling, and labor on in fields for which they are not fitted, with a hopeless prospect of future success. We have then herein that from which we may adduce that principle, patent in nature—*adaptation*. There is adaptation in mental employments, adaptation in physical engagements, adaptation in celestial things, in things terrestrial,—in the gushing

fountain, the gurgling rill, the winding brook, the coursing streamlet, the bounding, leaping, rushing river,—through lowland and valley, by hill and mountain side,—to slake the thirst of the mountaineer and rude inhabitant of the forest, watering, vitalizing and fertilizing border and boundary in the onward passage toward the fathomless deep. Who that looks abroad upon nature, can fail of admiration and wonder at the beauty and harmony of adaptation, (as well of compensation,) in life *to* life, in the animal and vegetable kingdoms? or does not discern the infinitude in controlling elements and governing processes? The noxious exhalations effete in the respirative processes of animal life, being expelled into outer ether, are, by nature's analysis and synthesis, absorbed or breathed in by the vegetable, through blade, leaf, and leaflet; and that which, by its retention, would have enervated and devitalized, *now* becomes the source and power of life.

In all things, both animate and inanimate, with which we are here surrounded; all objects made apparent to our senses,—the earth, the air, the water,—all with their multitudinous but appropriate inhabitants, is this principle manifest, and ever true to its Eternal Lawgiver. The feathered tribes for the air, the aquatics for the water, creeping things, four-footed beasts and man for the dry land,—all alike with their appropriate spheres and sustentation, obviously show forth the principle to which we have just alluded. We have but to turn the eye upon the scene that is spread out before us in life, and without any very great stretch of the mental vision, we are enabled to discern the apparent alienation from, or perversion of, this established principle in nature upon every side, in the business of daily life, giving undoubted evidences of men having mistaken their calling. Many having made choice of vocations, either from some particular fancy, fame, emolument accruing therefrom, or from some other misguided motive, and not

having properly regarded the demands incurred, are, forsooth, not in their element, and are as fish out of water, or like men overboard battling with the elements around them. It is only by looking within one's self, investigating thoroughly, and scrutinizing most closely, their various qualities and developments, seeking out the object for which they are especially fitted, and bestowing them upon the same, that men fulfil the true end of their destiny, and carry into effect this principle of adaptation or pre-existent fitness.

We have, then, qualifications, I may say of a two-fold, yet kindred nature. The first, pre-existent and innate; the second, co-existent—the legitimate issue in application to the first. Co-existent, then, and as the proper exponent of these innate capacities or endowments, we find special qualifications for special engagements. Thus, with the combined strength, and adequate force of these necessary qualifications, men go forth to the duties and conflicts of life, with insuperable certainty of success, and of the highest attainments.

You, gentlemen, come up here, as those, who by the active duties of life, and by reason of your own volition, have cast lot among the professions. You own identity with *us*, and acknowledge ours as the calling that henceforth is to engage your attention, enlist your energies, call forth the genius and talent of you lives. And as such, let me put the inquiry to you personally, as to the why and wherefore of your choice. What have been the influences, inducements or motives, leading you to the course you have adopted? Why should you have made *this* your choice, rather than any other profession or vocation? Have you studied to apply this great principle of adaptation? Has fame, ambition, an honorable calling, or the love of ease,—the apparently small operation performed, contrasted with the amply compensating fee, induced you to enter upon the field before you, regardless of other far more important considerations? Have any or all of these combined, actuated you,

regardless of a careful consideration of the requirements of labor, of genius, of energy and of other corresponding fitness for the field that is before you?

If *such* have been the inducements with any of you to enter upon study, or engage in the practice of *dentistry*, I would ask of you to pause for a moment and reflect, lest it may be, perchance, you have erred in judgment, and taken an unpremeditated or misguided step. But, on the contrary, if you have been actuated by a just regard of indispensable fitness adequate to the requisition made, then I would say to you *go on*. If possible, I would inspire you with hope, courage, confidence; our profession need you—your aid, your energies, your zeal, your talents, your skill. Men of progress are needed in our ranks; men whose restless, resistless and outgoing wills, unsatisfied with present attainments, are ever striving—reaching out—desirous to bring within their compass that which they cannot—that which as yet is unattainable. It is in this way, by the oft repeated effort to compass that which is beyond the reach, by which every nerve and every fibre is put upon the stretch, that the mountains are come over, or the deep things measured. The man who does not set his mark above that which he ever expects to reach in this life, will never—*no, never*—attain even to that he most reasonably anticipated.

Furthermore, I would say to you, that the field for usefulness and eminence is open before you; in it there is no attainment so high, nor position so elevated, as not to be prospectively within the reach of him whose aims are high. Therefore, would I urge you, by the loftiest and noblest aspirations of our nature, to be incited to all honorable ambition.

I would not be understood to speak disparagingly of the increase or growth of our profession; far from it. But while I would that our increase of numbers should be in keeping with the true

demands upon us, I would, also, that this external development, so to speak, be one of self-sustentation—the emanation of a life-giving and life-sustaining principle, innate and inbred; and not the mere excrescence of an external growth, possessing but little or no powers of vitality, and devoid of specific function.

Turning aside now from that of which we have just been taking but a cursory view, and leaving the matter with you, for each one more fully to consider, carry out and settle, with and for himself, we pass to the consideration of other things, and more especially to such as shall claim attention during the continuance of our session.

Having your standard raised above the common level of a mediocrity, aim for the highest attainable qualifications in the profession of your choice. If you have not already, begin at once; and mark out for yourself a systematic plan of thought, and of study, and in the course of that study, and, indeed, through all life, keep a record of your thoughts and ideas in the round of their occurrence. Bear in remembrance, that thoughts and ideas are but *things*, and therefore should not be allowed to pass unnoticed or unheeded.

But the question may arise in your minds, why—*thoughts, things?* Look to it. The idea is conceived of the applicability of electrical excitation as a means of transmitting messages from place to place; the man of science, acting true to the suggestive impulse, builds upon the idea of an interrupted current—constructs his machine—suspends his lines of metal—and *now*, throughout our land, city, town, village and hamlet, are joined with this chain of communication, by which thoughts—commercial, political or civil—sweep with lightning speed from place to place. And what is this but the outwrought mind or fully developed thought?

I might multiply illustrations indefinitely, but it is unnecessary: only let me impress you with the true importance of valuing proper thought. Thoughts, like passing events, glide swiftly by, and are not signalized, no matter how important, save by their notation. They may be chaotic, but none the less valuable; they may appear mixed up with crudeness, but, nevertheless, like the ore in its native richness, needs only to be subjected to the *study fire*, moulded, formed, forged out and reduced to the *sheet*. They need but the analysis to determine their intrinsic value, or real purity.

Our business, in part, as dental practitioners, is to search out the expedients of preservation and repair, to restore to nature that which has been lost. This last, more especially it is, which is incumbent upon me to teach. In this particular department of practice is brought into requisition the combined study of nature in the application of art, that blends itself synthetically in restoring to nature that which has been lost; giving to the face its wonted harmony of features, and to the countenance the expression of nature, while to the voice is imparted the enunciative tones of nature's endowment; and, indeed, to the whole economy new life and fresh vigor are not unfrequently superadded; the achievement of *science*, honorable and elevated. Still, however, while our science and art have contributed, and do still continue to contribute in so high a degree to emulate nature, and while the highest aims, ardent desires, most earnest and unfailing efforts, have reached an almost inconceivable degree of perfection, it still remains for us to bow before the wisdom of the omnipotent hand, and confess our inability to compass Him.

I am here then to represent that department styled mechanical dentistry; and I might, with great propriety, as well as with strict justice to my chair, dwell at length upon the importance that should be attached to it; or, in viewing it in the light in which I regard

it, but waiving for the present a consideration of its real importance, essential character and practical utility, I have but to ask the candid reflection and mature thought that it justly demands, of every young practitioner at least, with regard to its connexion as a means of acquiring both reputation and practice. This part of our operations it is especially that comes under the observation, as well as inspection and scrutiny of all, and thereby receives either a just condemnation, or laudable appreciation, accordingly as the mind is favorably or unfavorably impressed with appropriate adaptedness to nature.

One more thought and I am done. As I before remarked, the field for labor, for usefulness and towards eminence is wide-spread before you, and although service may be required at your hands, bear this ever in mind—that bread cometh but by husbandry—attainment by effort—efficiency by labor—excellency by zeal—triumph by unabated vigor—victory by the battle—and with the realization of this in you, every exigency in your eventful lives will be successively, as well as successfully, *met and surmounted.*

12, 9. 1860.—F.

